



## **REQUIREMENTS FOR WINDOW WELLS**

# **CODE INFORMATION SHEET**

**2012**

*The code requires that every sleeping room or living area must be provided with a secondary means of escape, unless the room has a direct exit to the exterior or the entire unit has a fire sprinkler system.*

*In case your primary exit is blocked by smoke and fire you will need a second way out. This means at least one operable window or exterior door approved for emergency egress or rescue must be available. This includes finished off basements and attic spaces used as TV rooms bedrooms, play rooms, ect.*



### **Requirements of the Vermont Fire and Building Safety Codes**

#### **( NFPA 101 - 24.2.2.3 )**

**Secondary Means of Escape.** The secondary means of escape, other than existing approved means of escape, shall be one of the means specified.

It shall be an outside window or door operable from the inside without the use of tools, keys, or special effort and shall provide a clear opening of not less than **5.7 sq. ft.** The width shall be not less than **20 in.**, and the height shall be not less than **24 in.** The bottom of the opening shall be not more than **44 in.** above the floor. Such means of escape shall be acceptable where one of the following criteria are met:

**Windows having a sill height below the adjacent ground level shall be provided with a window well meeting the following criteria:**

The **window well** shall have horizontal dimensions that allow the window to be fully opened.

The window well shall have an accessible net clear opening of not less than **9 sq. ft.** with a length and width of not less than **36 in.**

A window well with a vertical depth of **more than 44 in.** shall be equipped with an approved permanently affixed ladder or with steps meeting the following criteria:

- i. The ladder or steps shall not encroach more than **6 in.** into the required dimensions of the window well.
- ii. The ladder or steps shall not be obstructed by the window.

Ladders or steps that comply with the requirements of 24.2.2.3(4)(c) shall be exempt from the requirements of 7.2.2.

The clear opening of an existing escape window shall be permitted to be not less than 5.0 square feet.

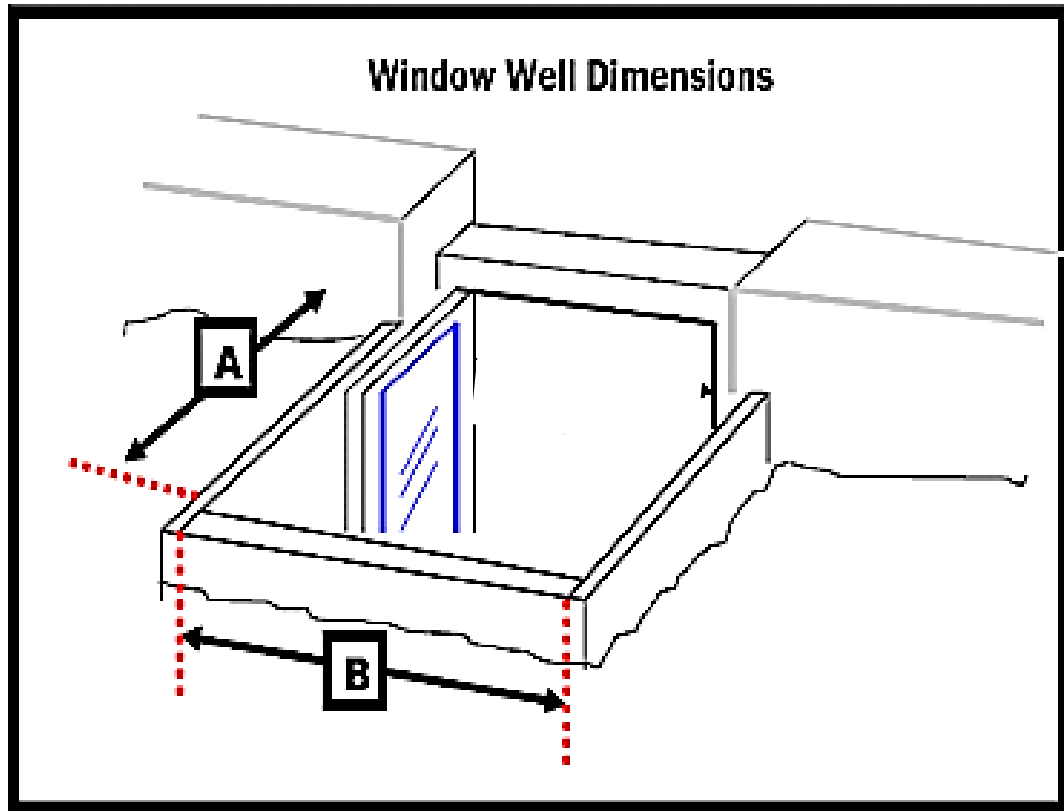
Bulkhead enclosures that provide direct access to the basement from the exterior maybe used as a secondary means of escape.

**Use the worksheet on the back of this sheet to determine whether your window well meets the requirements for second means of escape.**

#### **Additional Information on back**

This sheet is designed to provide information to enhance the public safety of all Vermonters. This code information sheet is not an all-inclusive list of state laws or additional code requirements that may apply. This educational resource sheet does not carry the force of legal opinion and was developed by the Vermont Division of Fire Safety, with information provided by The U.S. Fire Administration and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). For additional information please visit [www.firesafety.vermont.gov](http://www.firesafety.vermont.gov)

## Secondary Means of Escape - Window Well Worksheet



### Window Well Worksheet

1. Measure the clear horizontal distance [A] \_\_\_\_ " Is it at least 36" ?    Yes [ ☐ ]    No [ ☐ ]
2. Measure the clear horizontal distance [B] \_\_\_\_ " Is it at least 36" ?    Yes [ ☐ ]    No [ ☐ ]
3. Are there stairs in the window well if the vertical depth from the ground level is more than 44"    Yes [ ☐ ]    No [ ☐ ]

**Check the window well opening area**

[A] \_\_\_\_\_ X [B] \_\_\_\_\_ = Area \_\_\_\_\_ Is the Area at least 1272 square inches    Yes [ ☐ ]    No [ ☐ ]